Family Economics Review

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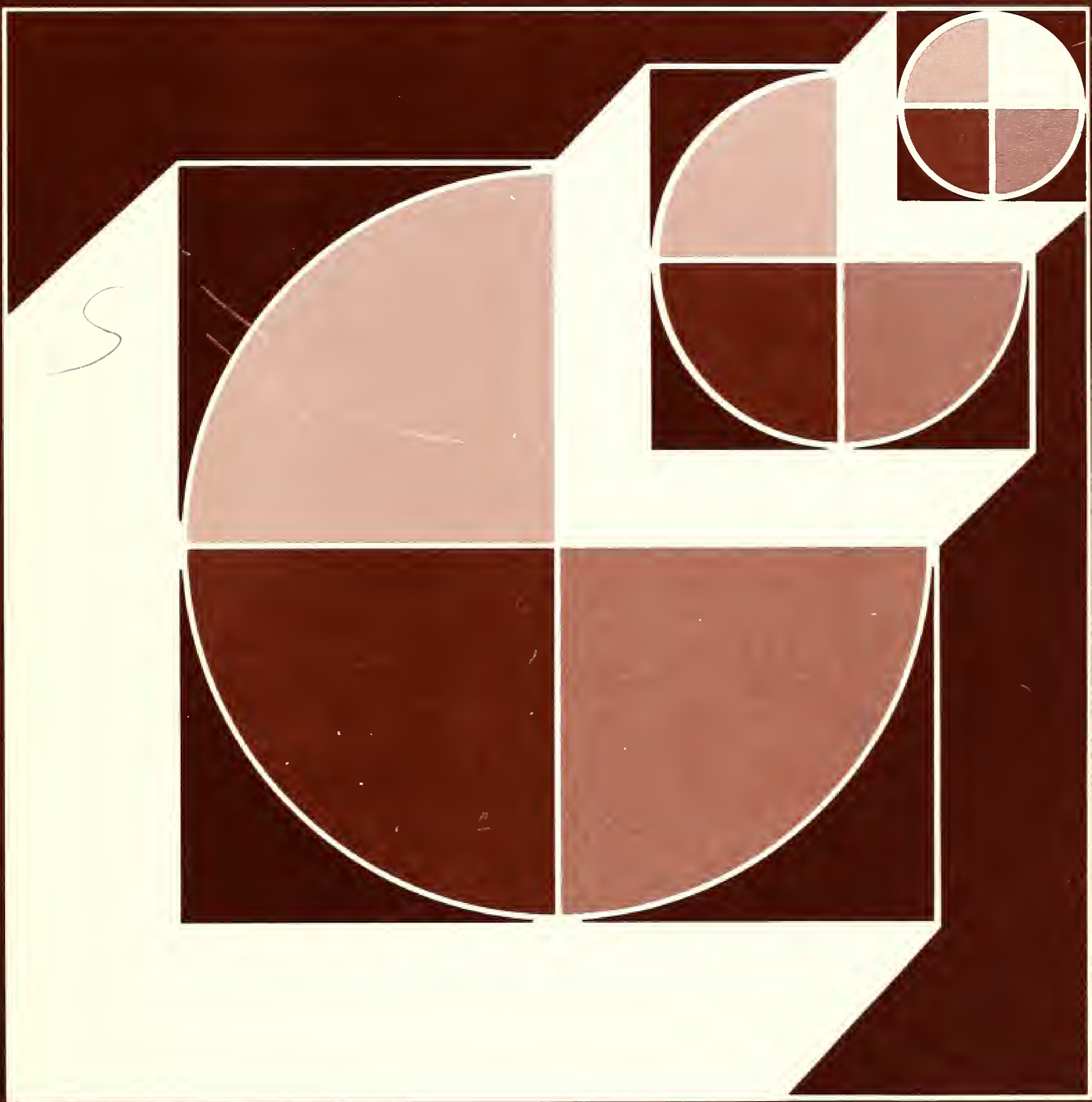

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Issued October 1985

Time Spent in Sewing by Employed Women

By Joan C. Courtless
Family economist

The increased labor force participation of women may account for some of the decline in the amount of home sewing that has taken place over recent years (6). The majority of women who do sew, however, are employed outside the home (1, 2). Although employment limits overall time available for household production activities, it may increase the need for types of clothing that can be sewn at home as well as purchased.

Home sewing requires a certain skill level, a fair amount of space, and a period of time relatively free of interruptions. It involves planning, preparation, and shopping prior to the actual sewing activity. Employed as well as nonemployed women who are willing to invest time and energy in attaining the necessary competence, work space, sewing tools, and materials may be motivated by the sense of personal satisfaction sewing affords them. Many women view sewing as a leisure activity; sewing gives them a chance to be creative and thus becomes a hobby rather than a chore.

This article reports a special analysis of time spent by employed women in sewing. Background on the data, descriptive information, and an analysis of factors associated with time spent in the activity are presented.

Data are from a study made by The University of Wisconsin-Extension, Department of Agricultural Journalism, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Extension Service.[1] The Family Economics Research Group of USDA's Agricultural Research Service provided partial support. Time diaries and questionnaires covering personal and demographic characteristics were completed by 378 employed Wisconsin and Illinois women in the fall and winter of 1978. Unmarried as well as married women were included in the sample. The women recorded time use in 30-minute intervals over 7 consecutive days.[2]

Time Spent in Sewing[3]

Only 55 of the 365 women (15 percent) recorded sewing in their 7-day time diary.[4] Three women reported that sewing was a usual activity that did not take place during the study week. Nearly 40 percent, however, mentioned sewing as a hobby. Apparently, many sewers do not sew every week.

The median time that the sewers spent at the activity during the diary week was 2 hours. One-fifth of the sewers, however, recorded 6 hours or more of sewing during the week.

About three-fifths of the women who sewed performed the activity on 1 day only; more than one-fifth sewed on 2 or 3 days. No more than 20 women sewed on any 1 day of the week (table 1). A few more women sewed on Tuesday, Sunday, and Monday than on other days. A shorter period of time was recorded by sewers on Friday and Saturday than on other days of the week. No differences were observed in median time spent on sewing by whether or not the day was a working or a nonworking day.

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[1] For a detailed report on the study see Diary Survey of Wisconsin and Illinois Employed Women, Bulletin 41, by Helen Leslie Steeves and Lloyd R. Bostian, The University of Wisconsin-Extension, Madison.

[2] The 30-minute recording interval, although larger than is customary for time diaries, was selected after pretesting indicated it would be the smallest interval that would result in satisfactory levels of cooperation and completeness for a 7-day study (8). Comparison of findings from the Wisconsin-Illinois study with those of other studies suggest that the results, nonetheless, are similar (8).

[3] Sewing does not include mending or shopping related to sewing. It does include sewing for the home and home crafts such as quilting and crocheting.

[4] Only 365 of the 378 cases were included in this analysis because of incomplete or miscoded responses.

Table 1. *Daily time spent in sewing, by day of week*

Day	Percent sewing	Median hours
Sunday........	5	1-3/4
Monday........	5	1-1/2
Tuesday.......	5	2
Wednesday.....	4	1-1/2
Thursday......	2	2
Friday.........	4	1
Saturday......	4	1

Characteristics of Sewers

Personal and demographic variables that might affect time spent in sewing were identified. These variables generally related to a woman's time demands, income level, attitudes about her employment, or clothing needs.[5] Statistical tests were carried out to ascertain whether or not each variable was related to weekly sewing time.[6] Only four of the variables were found to make statistically significant differences in time for sewing: A sewing hobby, marital status, husband's work shift, and own income.

Women who named something related to sewing among their first three hobbies spent significantly more time in sewing than did the remaining women. Having a sewing hobby was the variable most strongly related to sewing time (significant at .001 level). Nearly 25 percent of women who had a sewing hobby sewed during the week; the median sewing time for these sewers was 2-1/4 hours, compared with 2 hours for all sewers (table 2). The importance of the variable as a determinant of home-sewing time supports previous research (1, 3) that suggested that sewing is more likely to be pursued by women who find it to be a creative outlet than by women who are motivated by economic reasons.

Married women spent significantly more time in sewing than did single, widowed, or divorced women. Time in sewing did not vary by whether or not these women had children or by the number of children in the family, an important variable when studying time used for clothing care (9) and other household tasks. Neither did home sewing time vary by whether or not married women received "help" with household work from their husbands. One possible explanation is that women who are not married may assume tasks that might otherwise be done by husbands, thereby increasing their workload to the degree that sewing--whether motivated by creative or economic reasons--becomes less feasible. Except for marital status, characteristics related to women's household work load were not related to home-sewing time.

Women whose husbands had regular hours of work were found to spend significantly more time in sewing than women whose husbands worked irregular hours or varying shifts. Sewing time did not differ by the time of day that the husband worked, however. Apparently, having a regular block of time during which sewing can be scheduled is conducive to spending time in the activity.

Table 2. *Characteristics of women sewers and time spent in sewing during diary week*

Characteristic	Percent sewing	Median hours
All women.......	15	2
Married.........	18	2
Own income under $8,000...	20	2
Husband works regular hours..	21	2
Sewing hobby....	24	2-1/4

[5] Variables included her age, marital status, and education; number of children; number of children at home; number of teenagers, age of youngest child; her own income, occupation, hours on job, work shift, future work plans, reason for working, and preference to work or not work; husband's income, hours on job, and work shift; feeling rushed; "help" from husband with household work; "help" from children with household work; reading fashion magazines; and a sewing hobby.

[6] Kruskal-Wallis test, significant at .05 level unless otherwise indicated.

Women with incomes under $8,000 (1978 dollars) spent significantly more time in sewing than did women who earned over $8,000. Husband's income was not related to sewing time, however. Together these findings suggest that items produced by home sewing are substituted for items that might otherwise be purchased from women's own earnings. Such items could include household items (for example, curtains) in addition to personal and family members' wardrobe needs.

Except for earnings level, no aspect of women's employment was related to home-sewing time. As in previous research (4), no relationship was found between hours of employment and time spent in sewing. Variables related to the employment situation, such as occupation, work shift, attitude about working, and future work plans, were not related to home-sewing time.

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Some New USDA Publications

The following are for sale from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402, 202-783-3238.

- 1985 Fact Book of U.S. Agriculture. Revised November 1984. Stock No. 001-000-04432-0. $4.
- A Profile of Female Farmers in America. January 1985. Stock No. 001-019-00378-2. $1.50.
- Composition of Foods: Vegetables and Vegetable Products, Raw...Processed... Prepared. August 1984. Stock No. 001-000-04427-3. $16.
- Dietary Levels: Households in the United States--Spring 1977. March 1985. Stock No. 001-000-04438-9. $8.
- Food Consumption, Prices, and Expenditures: 1963-1983. November 1984. Stock No. 001-019-00370-7. $4.50.

Single copies of the following are available from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, Room 208, 1301 New York Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20005-4788.

- The Current Financial Condition of Farmers and Farm Lenders. March 1985. 48 pp. AIG 490. Free.

Adjustable Rate Mortgages: Consumer Information Needs and Recent Developments[1]

By Carolyn E. Summers
Economist[2]

A variety of mortgage instruments, including adjustable rate mortgages (ARM's), allow families to tailor loans to their specific needs and circumstances.[3] When ARM's were first introduced in the early seventies as alternatives to the traditional, fixed-rate, fixed-payment mortgage, they were authorized under regulations that specified the details of the new instruments and placed heavy emphasis on consumer safeguards and disclosures. Comparisons were reasonably simple. With an increasingly deregulated economy, however, regulatory changes gradually have granted lenders more latitude in designing mortgage instruments. Would-be borrowers now find a wide variety of ARM's. Most lenders offer several ARM's, and ARM's vary substantially among lenders. Opportunities for borrowers to choose among or even negotiate the design of loans are balanced by new responsibilites for borrowers to gather, understand, and act upon large amounts of complex information. This article describes 11 features that borrowers should consider when gathering information and making an ARM choice.

ARM FEATURES

Interest Rate

Interest charges on ARM's are computed on the basis of the movement of an index plus a margin or spread that is added to cover the lender's business costs and profit. For example, if the index is at 10 percent and the lender's margin is 2 percentage points, the rate would be 12 percent. If the index rises to 12 percent, the ARM rate would become 14 percent.

There are dozens of indexes that may be used, each reflecting differing influences. The index used must be one over which the lender has no control and which may be verified by the borrower. Although many newspapers and popular publications are beginning to print typical ARM indexes, there is no single source of information for would-be borrowers to review the movements of all the possible indexes that may be used by local lenders.

Indexes most typically used are **U.S. Treasury indexes**, such as monthly average yields on 1-year, 3-year, and 5-year U.S. Treasury securities adjusted to constant maturity; **mortgage rates** as measured by the Federal Home Loan Bank Board's (FHLBB) National Average Mortgage Contract Rate for Major Lenders on the Purchase of Previously-Occupied Homes; and national, regional, or local **cost-of-funds indexes** that reflect what banking institutions must pay to attract deposits, such as the FHLBB's semiannual National Average Cost of Funds to FSLIC-Insured Institutions. Longer term indexes, such as mortgage rates and cost-of-funds indexes, are less volatile than short-term indexes. Payments on ARM's tied to long-term indexes will rise less quickly than on ARM's tied to short-term indexes when general rates in the economy are rising, but will be slow to adjust downward when rates are declining. Indexes reflecting banks' costs of funds may rise even though the general level of rates is declining because institutions are having to pay more interest to depositors as the industry is deregulated.

[1] Information in this article is based on regulations and publications of the Federal Home Loan Bank Board, the Comptroller of the Currency, and the Federal Reserve Board, as well as information from the Federal National Mortgage Association, the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation, the Mortgage Bankers Association, and the National Association of Realtors.

[2] Formerly with the Family Economics Research Group, Agricultural Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

[3] The development of alternative mortgage instruments has been discussed by the author in several previous issues of Family Economics Review--Fall 1978:8-16, 1982(4): 1-18, 1983(4):26-27, and 1984(1):7-16.

The overall interest cost of an ARM will be determined by the pattern of index changes over the term of the loan, the frequency at which the loan rate is adjusted, and the timing of the adjustments. Sometimes an average of several index readings taken over a period of time is used as the basis for adjustments. This provides a safeguard against tying rate and payment changes to unusual behavior in an index that may be captured by a reading on a given day.

Initial Interest Rate and Payment Levels

ARM's generally are priced lower than fixed-rate, fixed-payment loans because the borrower is bearing some or all of the risk of inflation. In addition, lenders may offer ARM's with initial interest rates and/or payments that are reduced or discounted below current ARM rates as an incentive to accept these instruments. These reductions may be achieved through discounts, buy-downs, or graduated payment features.

Lenders typically offer **discounted** ARM's that carry payments based on interest rates that are lower than the sum of the prevailing index rate and their margin. These discounts may be in effect for 6 months, for 1 year, or for the first adjustment period of the loan. For example, even though the index is at 10 percent and the lender's margin is 2 percentage points (making the loan rate 12 percent), the interest charges and payments for the first year on a 1-year ARM may be based on a discounted rate of 9 percent. It is important to determine the duration of the discount period and to realize that payments will rise at the end of the discount period whether or not the index to which the loan rate is tied changes.

It is also important to determine whether both payments and interest charges or just the payments are being calculated on the basis of the discounted rate. If both payments and interest charges are tied to the discounted rate, the loan is being fully amortized by the monthly payments. In some cases, however, the monthly payments are set by the discounted rate, but the interest charges are based on the index plus the margin. Negative amortization is built into the loan. That is, the payments do not cover the interest charges on the loan. The unpaid interest is added to the outstanding principal balance, and the debt grows; the borrower is charged interest on the deferred interest.

Borrowers may assume a false sense of security if they do not understand that the discounts are temporary and that payments can increase substantially at the end of the discount. For those not intending to remain in a home very long, though, discounted initial payments and rate can be a major plus in the choice of a loan. Even if the advantage of the discount is substantially offset by a large increase at the first adjustment period, an ARM that is substantially discounted in the first year could be a reasonable choice. On the other hand, short-term homeowners could realize a significant loss of equity at the time of sale if the payment reductions are achieved through discounts involving negative amortization.

A **buy-down** is another method of achieving lower initial monthly payments and is also sometimes used as a means to grant loans to borrowers who otherwise would not qualify under prevailing interest rates.[4] In a buy-down, a third party (typically a builder) pays a fee to the lender to subsidize the interest in the early years of the loan. The fee paid by the third party covers the difference between what the borrower pays and the payments necessary to amortize the 12 percent loan; negative amortization does not take place. For example, an ARM with an interest rate of 12 percent, adjusted every 3 years, would be bought down so that the borrower's payments in the first 3 years were based on interest rates of 9, 10, and 11 percent in those years, respectively.

A **graduated payment** (GP) feature may be added to an ARM as another method to reduce initial monthly payments. In a GPARM, initial monthly payments are set below what would be dictated by the interest rate on the loan and rise according to a predetermined amount and schedule. Negative

[4]See "Creative Residential Finance," Family Economics Review 1984 No. 1, pp. 7-16, by Carolyn Summers Edwards and Isabelle S. Payton.

amortization is built into GPARM's. If the interest charges are tied to an index during the graduation period and the index rises, negative amortization is increased. If the index drops, the built-in negative amortization is offset.

Scheduling and Calculation of Interest Rate Adjustments

The interest rate on an ARM may be adjusted as frequently as monthly or as infrequently as every 5 years. The frequency of rate adjustments on ARM's linked to U.S. Treasury indexes typically coincides with the maturity of the security. For example, ARM's linked to 1-year Treasury securities are adjusted annually. ARM's that are adjusted less frequently generally carry higher interest rates. There is a price, in other words, for the security of knowing that the rate and payments will remain constant.

It is important to determine the dates of the first and subsequent rate adjustments and, particularly in the case of loans with discounts or buy-downs, how the new rate will be determined. In the most basic ARM, the initial interest rate is the contract rate as determined by the index and margin. If the index reading to be applied at the first adjustment does not differ from the contract rate, there is no change in the rate or payments. If the index has risen or fallen, the contract rate is increased or decreased by the amount of that change, and the payments are adjusted accordingly.

As mentioned earlier, with discounted ARM's and buy-downs the interest rate and payments will rise at the end of the discount period even if the index has not moved. The amount of that increase can vary substantially depending on how the rates at the first and subsequent adjustment periods are determined. The new rate and payments may be based on the margin and index in effect at the time of adjustments or on the margin and index prevailing when the loan was originated. If the latter is used and the index has declined, the built-in increase due at the end of the discount period is offset. If, on the other hand, the margin and index prevailing at origination are used as the basis for adjusting interest rate and payments, an index decline would not offset the scheduled rate and payment increases. If the index rises during the first adjustment period, however, it would be preferable for the new rate and payments to be tied to the margin and index prevailing at origination.

It is very important for the borrower to determine each lender's margin when comparing discounted ARM's in which the first rate and payment adjustment is based on the margin plus index prevailing at time of adjustment. Two loans, with the same initial discounted rates and with subsequent interest rates tied to the same index, eventually can differ substantially in rates and payments, depending on the margin.

Limits on Interest Rate Adjustments

Caps that prevent the interest rate on an ARM from rising or falling beyond a specified level or by a specified amount each adjustment period or over the life of the loan (a feature required by the early regulations) may be offered on some ARM's. For example, adjustments may be limited to 2 percentage points per year or per adjustment period and to 5 percentage points over the life of the loan. Sometimes lifetime caps are quoted as top and bottom limits, such as a 12 percent ARM that can never rise above 15 percent and never fall below 9 percent. In addition to shielding the borrower from extreme payment changes, interest rate caps allow the borrower to calculate a "worst case scenario" and to evaluate the potential risk involved.

Increases and decreases not taken in an adjustment period because of the cap may be carried over. For example, if the change in the index warranted a 3-percentage-point increase during an adjustment period but the cap limited adjustments per period to 2 percentage points, the remaining percentage point could be applied in the following period. As a consequence, the interest rate on the ARM could rise in a period when the index fell if increases carried over from previous periods exceeded the index decline in the current adjustment period.

It is important to determine to what rate the interest rate cap applies. As in the case of the calculation of interest rate

adjustments in the first period, this is particularly true with ARM's carrying discounts or buy-downs. The cap may apply to the initial, discounted rate or the rate as determined by the margin plus index rate prevailing at origination. For example, a 2-percentage-point cap could be added to the ARM discussed earlier. The loan rate of 12 percent (index of 10 percent and margin of 2 percentage points) was discounted to 9 percent. The rate and payments at first adjustment are to be based on the margin and index rate in effect at origination. If the cap applies to the discounted rate of 9 percent and there has been no movement in the index during the first period, the new rate would be 11 percent. Although the end of the discount would indicate an increase to 12 percent (the index of 10 at origination plus the margin of 2), the cap limits the increase to 2 percentage points. If the index did not move again during the next period, the interest rate would become 12 (the index of 10 plus the margin of 2). Alternatively, if the cap applies to the rate at origination of 12 percent rather than to the discounted rate, the new rate at the end of the first adjustment period would increase from the discounted level of 9 percent to the rate of 12 percent, even though the index had not changed. The 2-percentage-point cap would limit subsequent increases or decreases warranted by changes in the index.

Limits on Payment Adjustments

Monthly payments may or may not be adjusted at the same time or to the same extent as interest rate adjustments. Payment caps may be used to restrict the adjustment of monthly payments to a less frequent schedule than that used for the adjustment of the interest rate. For example, the interest rate may be adjusted annually, but the payments may only be adjusted every 3 years. Alternatively, payment increases at each adjustment may be restricted to a certain level, such as 7-1/2 percent, even if changes in the index call for higher increases.

Payment caps offer a degree of certainty regarding payment level. As in the case of a GPARM, however, the payment-capped ARM may amortize more slowly (negative amortization takes place) or more quickly than reflected by the payments, depending on the movement of the index to which the interest rate is tied. The advantage of the security of steady or restricted payments could be negated, however, by dramatic increases in monthly payments that ultimately may occur when payments are adjusted to reflect accumulated changes in the interest rate or growth in the debt due to negative amortization.

Limits on Negative Amortization/Growth of Principal

ARM's that involve negative amortization, such as GPARM's and loans with payment caps, typically limit increases in the principal to 125 percent of the original loan balance. For example, the limit would be reached if payments on a $60,000 ARM had not risen sufficiently to prevent the debt from rising to $75,000. If the maximum balance were reached, the contract might require either that (a) payments be reset to fully amortize the loan by the end of the term, (b) a lump-sum payment be made, (c) the loan be considered due, (d) the loan be refinanced, and/or (e) the term be extended.

Extension of Loan Term

Some ARM's have a provision that the loan may be extended as an alternative to increasing the monthly payments when the index rises. Loans also may be extended as a means of paying off increases in the loan balance that have resulted from negative amortization. Thirty-year loans generally can be extended to a maximum of 40 years. Borrowers need to determine whether or not this option is available, and if it is, who makes the decision to extend the loan term (borrower or lender) and any costs that may be involved. Although extending the loan can be costly, it might be preferable to the alternative of refinancing in the event that negative amortization increases the balance to the maximum amount.

Conversion to a Fixed-Rate Mortgage

Some ARM's contain a provision that permits the borrower to convert the loan to a fixed-rate contract. Conversion may take place only at preset times, such as after the first, third, or fifth years. Conversion can give the borrower the opportunity to fix the interest rate and payments before experiencing adjustments. The borrower needs to determine (a) what, if any, costs would be involved and (b) how the rate to which the loan could be converted would be determined--that is, a pre-specified rate, the rate on the loan prevailing at the time of conversion, or the rate prevailing for fixed-rate contracts at the time of conversion.

Assumption

In contrast with fixed-rate mortgages, ARM's generally are assumable by qualified borrowers. Because ARM's reflect current market rates, lenders are not faced with the risk of holding long-term, low-yielding loans underwritten with short-term, higher cost financing. Borrowers anticipating selling in a short period of time would want to determine what procedures and fees might be required when passing the ARM to a buyer. Depending on the movement of rates and the features of the loan, an assumable ARM might be an advantage in a subsequent sale.

Prepayment

Would-be borrowers should determine if ARM's they are evaluating can be prepaid in full or part without penalty. Prepayment may arise when the borrower wants to sell the home, finds that refinancing may be desirable, or needs to alter the terms of the loan because deferred interest has increased the balance to the maximum allowed.

Points

Lenders charge points or discount fees at the origination of home mortgage loans. A point is equal to 1 percent of the loan amount and is required at settlement. Some lenders will allow the option of paying points to reduce the interest rate on the loan. Points are typically quoted separately as charges to the buyer and to the seller but are a negotiable factor. Sellers may be unwilling to pay points or may be less willing to pay them than to negotiate a lower sales price.

When comparing ARM's with varying features, would-be borrowers should remember that ARM's with many safeguards may also require the payment of more points, making such loans less of a bargain than they may first appear. Points become a more important factor, too, if the borrower expects to hold the loan for only a short time.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Would-be borrowers are less likely now than in the past few years to find ARM's that are deeply discounted with "teaser rates" or that contain no protections. In an effort to prevent defaults and foreclosures, mortgage insurers and secondary-market institutions are requiring more consumer safeguards and are tightening the requirements that prospective buyers must meet to qualify for a loan. Market experience with ARM's is revealing which features and safeguards are important to borrowers and lenders alike.

Effective ARM choices necessitate an active role by the would-be borrower in gathering information as well as in understanding and acting upon that information. Although that task never will be an easy one, it is becoming more manageable as agencies and organizations involved in residential finance recognize the importance of making information available. Several publications designed to provide would-be borrowers with information to increase borrower understanding of factors involved in the selection of a mortgage now are available (see box on p. 9).

Increased concern about the adequacy of information given by lenders to consumers entering ARM agreements has prompted the Federal Reserve Board to propose amendments to Regulation Z (the implementing regulations for the Truth-in-Lending legislation). As Family Economics Review went to press, there were three proposed amendments under review that would provide more information to consumers about ARM's and encourage uniformity of disclosure requirements among agencies.

The first proposed amendment would require creditors to make informational materials about adjustable rate mortgages available to consumers. This information would illustrate the important features of ARM's and would alert would-be borrowers to important questions to ask. The Consumer Handbook on Adjustable Rate Mortgages developed by the Federal Reserve Board and the Federal Home Loan Bank Board, as well as booklets produced by the Federal National Mortgage Association and the Mortgage Bankers Association (see box), would fulfill this requirement.

The second proposed amendment would expand disclosure information currently required by Regulation Z. Would-be borrowers currently receive standard Truth-in-Lending disclosure information and only abbreviated information on the variable-rate features of a loan. The proposed amendment would require that disclosures include information on the index, margin, and initial loan rate; the frequency of rate and payment adjustments; any rate or payment caps; and the possibility of negative amortization. Any limits on negative amortization would have to be specified. If the loan contained no caps, the disclosure would have to indicate that there were no limits on potential increases in rate and payments. A transaction-specific example, based on the amount of the loan, would have to show the effects on the payment schedule of index changes, rate and payment caps, and other features that could affect payments. An illustrated payment schedule assuming no changes in rates for the term of the loan would be contrasted with one assuming an increase of 2 percentage points in the index rate in each of the first 3 years during which a rate increase was permitted.

Finally, the third proposed amendment would eliminate a provision, designed to alleviate duplicative disclosures, that permits creditors to substitute disclosures required by other Federal regulators for the variable rate disclosure required by the Federal Reserve Board's Regulation Z. Under current regulations, the nature and timing of disclosures provided by various lenders depends on which regulatory authority's (or authorities') guidelines a lender must comply with. The Federal Home Loan Bank Board, the Comptroller of the Currency, and the Department of Housing and Urban Development each require disclosure of specific variable rate features for institutions under their jurisdiction. The disclosures required by these agencies are far more detailed than those currently required by Regulation Z. The proposed elimination of substituting one agency's requirements for another's reflects the Federal Reserve Board's view that uniformity of variable rate disclosures would better serve both borrowers and lenders than the current overlapping of Federal regulations. Other agencies could continue to impose their own disclosure requirements in addition to those required by Regulation Z.

HOME FINANCING INFORMATION SOURCES

- Mortgage Money Guide. Available for $0.50 from Consumer Information Center, Pueblo, CO 81009.
- Using Ads to Shop for Home Financing. Available (single copy free) from Federal Trade Commission, Division of Credit Practices, Washington, DC 20580.
- What You Should Know About ARMS and How to Shop For a Mortgage. Available (single copy free) from Mortgage Bankers Association, Public Relations, 1125 15th Street, NW., Washington, DC 20005.
- Fannie Mae's Consumer Guide on ARMS. Available (single copy free) from Consumer Guide, Box 23867, Baltimore, MD 21203.
- Consumer Handbook on Adjustable Rate Mortgages. Available (single copy free) from Federal Reserve Board of New York, Public Information Department, 33 Liberty Street, New York, NY 10045; or Federal Home Loan Bank Board, 1700 G Street, NW., Washington, DC 20552.

Uniform Marital Property Act

The National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws drafted the Uniform Marital Property Act (UMPA),[1] which recognizes the family as an economic unit and requires the sharing between the spouses of all property acquired during a marriage, regardless of which spouse has earned or assumed title to the property. In July 1983, after 3 years of consideration, the commissioners approved the UMPA and recommended enactment by the States. The American Bar Association approved UMPA a year later.

Under the UMPA, each spouse has one-half interest in the marital property. Marital property includes all forms of income attributable to either spouse, ranging from wages and salaries to income from trusts and investments. Commingled or "mixed" property is considered marital, except for individual property that can be specifically traced. Income produced from individual property during marriage and appreciation of individual property that results from the efforts of the other spouse are marital property. If a question arises about the classification of property, the act assumes the property is marital; the spouse claiming individual property must supply sufficient evidence to support the claim.

Marital property does not include individual property that was acquired before the marriage or before the UMPA became effective in the State. Property brought into the marriage is considered to be individual property, unless the couple agrees to make it marital property. An inheritance by a spouse, a gift to a particular spouse, recovery of damages for personal injury, and appreciation of individual property generally remain individual property.

[1] A copy of the Uniform Marital Property Act and additional materials can be obtained for $2 from the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws, Suite 510, 645 North Michigan, Chicago, IL 60611.

Specific provisions of the act cover:

- Credit. Since the act designates the property that a creditor may use to satisfy a debt, the non-wage-earning spouse's opportunity to obtain credit may be enhanced.
- Divorce. Property division will continue to be governed by a State's divorce statute. On a property inventory developed for a divorce, however, each spouse will have one-half interest in marital property.
- Death. The actual distribution of marital property is governed by the State's probate laws. Only a spouse's share of marital property goes to his or her estate, however. Spouses are allowed to pass their shares in marital property to each other without probate.
- Gifts. UMPA limits gifts to third parties from marital property by a spouse acting individually to a small amount; UMPA recommends a $500 limit.

Special provisions of the act also address life insurance and deferred employment benefits.

Under UMPA, management and control of marital property generally is given to the spouse whose name appears on the title documents. If spouses jointly hold title to certain property (Jane Doe and John Doe), both must participate in its management and control; however, if title is held in an alternative form, either spouse may assume that function. UMPA requires that all marital property be managed in good faith for the marriage. If it is not, the injured spouse may recover from the spouse responsible for the injury. Provisions inhibit and restrain agreements that are designed to avoid family responsibilities.

A third person acquiring property from a spouse may rely upon the title document, even if the other spouse's name does not appear on the document or does not agree to the transfer of ownership. In these situations the injured spouse may not recover from the third party.

A couple may develop its own alternative marital property agreement. The agreement must be in writing, signed, and in compliance with other requirements in the act.

The UMPA is under consideration in several States, having been introduced in 1985 in the State legislatures of Connecticut, Indiana, Michigan, North Dakota, and Ohio. The State of Wisconsin has adopted the basic UMPA provisions, and the property reform provisions will become effective on January 1, 1986.

Sources: National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws, 1983, Uniform Marital Property Act, as approved at the annual conference meeting, Boca Raton, FL; Uniform Law Commissioners, [no date], The Uniform Marital Property Act: Questions and Answers, Chicago, IL; Uniform Law Commissioners, [no date], Summary: The Uniform Marital Property Act, Chicago, IL.

Value of Food Used in Households With Elderly Members

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The well-being of the elderly depends on a variety of factors--income, health, housing, and preparation for retirement. Dietary adequacy is another factor of major concern, especially as more and more elderly maintain their own households and, perhaps, eat alone. These factors have become the focus of many studies since an increasing percentage of the U.S. population, now about 12 percent, are 65 years or older.[1]

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[1]U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1985. State population estimates by age and components of change: 1980 to 1984. Current Population Reports, Population Estimates and Projections, Series P-25, No. 970.

This article presents findings on the money value, quantity, and nutritive value of food used at home by 2,066 households that contained 1 or more persons 65 years of age or older. Data are grouped first for all households surveyed and then for two categories of these households with elderly members: (1) Those that achieved the 1974 Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDA) for all of seven selected nutrients, and (2) those that did not meet the allowances for all seven nutrients. The nutrients were protein, calcium, iron, vitamin A, thiamin, riboflavin, and ascorbic acid. These nutrients have been studied in previous USDA food consumption surveys, and their content in food is fairly well established. Fifty-six percent of the sample households met the RDA for all seven nutrients and 44 percent did not.

Results show that such factors as increased allocations of money for food, use of larger quantities of food, and increased care in the selection of foods providing a well-balanced diet would benefit the elderly household population. Selecting more milk products and fruits and vegetables would improve the nutrient content of elderly household diets. Households meeting the RDA for all seven nutrients spent more for home food, used larger quantities of most kinds of foods, selected a greater number of foods, and had food supplies with higher nutrient-to-calorie ratios for more nutrients than did households not meeting the RDA for all seven nutrients. The nutrient returns per dollar as well as the nutritive value per 1,000 Calories for calcium and vitamin A were lower among the households that did not meet the seven RDA than among those that did. About four-fifths of the households grouped as not meeting the seven RDA fell short of the recommendation for calcium, one-half fell short for food energy, and about one-third did not meet the allowances for vitamin A and thiamin.

The Sample

Data were collected in a supplemental survey to the Nationwide Food Consumption Survey 1977-78 conducted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.[2] Information is presented for housekeeping households[3] surveyed in the spring and summer of 1977 (April through September).[4]

Interviews were conducted with the person considered to be most responsible for food planning and preparation in the household. Trained interviewers used an aided-recall questionnaire to obtain the kind (such as ground beef and skim milk), the form (such as fresh, canned, or frozen), the quantity, and the cost, if purchased, of each food and beverage used in the household during the 7 days prior to the interview. "Food used" refers to all food that disappeared from household food supplies during the 7-day period, including food eaten by household members and guests as well as that discarded in the kitchen or at the table and leftovers fed to pets.

A special measure, the 21-meal-equivalent-person, was used to compare the values and quantities of food used by households with varying numbers of members who ate different numbers of meals at home. An equivalent-person equals 21 meals from home food supplies, based on 3 meals daily for a week.

Although households were the unit of study, most consisted of an elderly person living alone (42 percent) or with one other member (43 percent) (table 1). In two-member households, over one-half were headed by an elderly man and an elderly woman. Overall, the median age for male heads was 70 years and the median age for female heads was 69. Of the households with one or two members, 57 percent met the RDA for all seven nutrients; and of households with three or more members, 48 percent met the RDA for all seven nutrients.

The before-tax income reported by households for the previous year, 1976, averaged $7,864. Nearly all, 96 percent, believed they had enough food--76 percent said it was the kind of food they wanted and 20 percent said it was not. Few participated in the Food Stamp Program or in Meals on Wheels.

Data relating to food practices showed that nearly one-half of those surveyed did major food shopping once a week and more than one-fourth shopped more frequently. About one-fifth shopped bimonthly or less often. Major food shopping was done at supermarkets by 91 percent and at small or other stores by 9 percent of the sample.

The majority traveled by car to the store, and fewer either walked or relied on others for transportation. Public transportation, taxis, or delivery services were rarely mentioned. Respondents generally indicated no special problems associated with obtaining their food--although sometimes they mentioned the inability to go shopping alone and to carry groceries. A lack of money or distance from the store was occasionally stated as a problem.

The two subpopulation groups (households that met the RDA for seven nutrients and households that did not) were similar in size (number of members), distribution among the four Census regions,[5] tenancy, race of the respondent, and age of household heads. Shopping practices and self-evaluations of food also varied little. The household composition of the two groups was essentially the same--nearly 50 percent were headed jointly by a male and a female, 41 percent were headed by a female only, and 10 percent by a male only. However, the average incomes before taxes for the previous year differed by $1,106--$8,341 for those who met all seven allowances and $7,235 for those who did not meet the allowances.

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[2] Robert L. Rizek, The 1977-78 Nationwide Food Consumption Survey, Family Economics Review, fall 1978, pp. 3-7.

[3] Housekeeping households are defined as households with at least 1 person having 10 or more meals from home food supplies during the week prior to the interview. Four percent of the sample were not housekeeping households.

[4] The survey was conducted from April 1977 through March 1978, but findings in this article are based on spring and summer 1977.

[5] Northeast, North Central, South, and West.

Table 1. *Selected characteristics of households with an elderly member* [1]

Characteristic	All households [2]	Households meeting 7 RDA	Households not meeting 7 RDA	Households meeting 7 RDA	Households not meeting 7 RDA
	Number			Percent	
Total households	2,066	1,149	917	100	100
Number of members in households:					
1	875	499	376	43	41
2	897	509	388	44	42
3	175	78	96	7	10
4	60	32	28	3	3
5	28	15	14	1	2
6 or more	32	17	15	2	2
Average number	1.84	1.81	1.88	(3)	(3)
Region:					
Northeast	509	294	215	26	23
North Central	566	317	250	28	27
South	664	353	311	31	34
West	327	186	141	16	15
Urbanization:					
Central city	723	407	317	35	34
Suburban	644	356	289	31	32
Nonmetropolitan	699	387	312	34	34
Tenancy:					
Owned	1,479	842	637	73	69
Rented	527	271	255	24	28
Occupied, no rent	60	35	25	3	3
Type of head:					
Male and female head	1,010	557	453	48	49
Female head only	853	473	380	41	41
Male head only	204	120	84	10	9
Median age of female head (years)	69	69	69	(3)	(3)
Median age of male head (years)	70	70	70	(3)	(3)
Household size in 21-meal-equivalent persons	1.84	1.76	1.93	(3)	(3)
Race of respondent:					
White	1,846	1,035	811	90	89
Black	195	101	94	9	10
Other	21	10	11	1	1
Major food shopping frequency:					
More than weekly	600	330	270	29	30
Weekly	1,007	569	438	50	48
Every other week	238	140	98	12	11
Monthly	198	96	102	8	11
Never	24	15	9	1	1
Kind of store:					
Supermarket	1,856	1,034	822	90	90
Small store	167	91	76	8	8
Other	19	10	10	1	1
Self-evaluation of food:					
Enough, kind wanted	1,572	882	690	77	75
Enough, not kind wanted	412	226	186	20	20
Sometimes not enough	59	34	25	3	3
Often not enough	18	7	10	1	1
	Dollars				
Household money income before taxes, 1976	7,864	8,341	7,235	(3)	(3)
Household income for the previus month	639	674	595	(3)	(3)
Money value of home food per 21-meal-equivalent person	16.85	20.52	12.63	(3)	(3)

[1] Data from USDA Nationwide Food Consumption Survey 1977-78, Elderly supplemental sample, spring and summer 1977.
[2] Some households did not answer certain questions, or the question did not apply to that household; therefore, number differs from the total number of households (2,066). Parts may not total to the whole due to rounding.
[3] Not applicable.

Food Used at Home

Elderly households averaged 1.84 members and $36.70 for a week's food. As shown in table 2, this amount consisted of $30.96 for food used at home plus $5.05 for meals and $0.69 for snacks purchased and eaten away from home. The value of food used at home included actual purchases plus imputed values for food that was home produced and food that was received as a gift or in payment for work.

The amount of food used in a week per 21-meal-equivalent-person included about 3-1/2 quarts of milk and milk products (in terms of calcium content); 4-2/3 pounds of meat, poultry, and fish; 6-1/2 pounds of vegetables; 5-1/2 pounds of fruits, including juice; 2-1/5 pounds of grain products (in terms of flour content); more than 1 pound of sugar and sweets; and 3/4 of a pound of fats and oils (table 3).

Households meeting the seven RDA were smaller in terms of 21-meal-equivalent-persons (1.76) than were their counterparts (1.93). They spent $20.52 per person for a week's home food--about $8 more than the $12.63 spent by the households not meeting the seven RDA. Although households with lower incomes generally devote a larger proportion of their income to food than do households with higher incomes, the households meeting the seven RDA averaged higher income and devoted proportionately more (23 percent) of their income to home food than did those not meeting the seven RDA (18 percent).

The food consumption practices of the two groups differed substantially. The households meeting the seven RDA used larger quantities of all major food groups and of selected subgroups per person in a week. For example, during the survey week these households used the calcium equivilent of nearly 2-1/2 quarts more milk; 1-1/2 pounds more meat, poultry, and fish; about 2 more large eggs; 3-1/2 pounds more vegetables; 3-1/2 pounds more fruits; and 1 pound more grain products per person than did the households not meeting the seven RDA.

Not only did the households that met the seven RDA consume larger quantities of food in a week, but also they used a greater number of foods. Presumably, the inclusion of a variety of foods helped them achieve the allowances.

Nutrient Levels

Diet quality was determined by the levels of food energy and 11 nutrients--the 7 previously mentioned, plus magnesium, phosphorus, and vitamins B_6 and B_{12}--present in food reported by households. Published food composition handbooks and unpublished data served as the bases for calculations of the nutritive value of the edible portions of food used, with adjustments for loss of vitamins during cooking. Although nutrient data were limited for some foods and for certain nutrients (particularly magnesium, vitamin B_6, and vitamin B_{12}), the data used were considered the best available at the time of the survey.

Table 2. *Money value of food per household*[1]

Household	Number of members	Total money value	Food at home	Food bought away from home: Total	Meals	Snacks
All households	1.84	$36.70	$30.96	$5.74	$5.05	$0.69
Meeting 7 RDA	1.81	42.65	36.23	6.43	5.72	.71
Not meeting 7 RDA	1.88	29.24	24.36	4.88	4.21	.67

[1] Data from USDA Nationwide Food Consumption Survey 1977-78, Elderly supplemental sample, spring and summer 1977.

Table 3. *Quantity of food used at home per person*[1] *in a week*[2]

Food	All households	Households meeting 7 RDA	Households not meeting 7 RDA
		Pounds	
Milk, cream, cheese (calcium equivalent)	7.38	9.79	4.63
Meat, poultry, fish	4.68	5.37	3.88
Beef	1.78	2.02	1.51
Bacon	.22	.26	.19
Other pork	.70	.81	.57
Luncheon meat	.34	.41	.26
Poultry	1.05	1.19	.90
Fish	.39	.45	.32
Other protein foods	1.20	1.41	.97
Eggs (fresh equivalent)	.70	.81	.57
Dry beans, peas, lentils	.13	.14	.12
Nuts, peanut butter	.11	.15	.06
Vegetables	6.49	8.11	4.64
Potatoes (fresh equivalent)	1.45	1.77	1.08
Dark green	.37	.51	.21
Deep yellow	.38	.49	.24
Tomatoes	1.02	1.28	.71
Fruits	5.47	7.10	3.59
Citrus (single-strength juice equivalent)	1.77	2.11	1.39
Other ascorbic-acid-rich	.70	.93	.44
Grain products (flour equivalent)	2.18	2.66	1.64
Fats and oils	.74	.90	.55
Sugars and sweets	1.10	1.33	.84
Sugar, syrup, jelly, candy	.87	1.06	.65
Alcoholic beverages	.59	.80	.35

[1] 21 meals from household food supplies equivalent to 1 person. Average value per person is calculated using population ratio procedure.
[2] Data from USDA Nationwide Food Consumption Survey 1977-78, Elderly supplemental sample, spring and summer 1977.

The nutritive value of the household food supply was compared with recommended amounts of nutrients according to the sex and age of persons eating in each household. The 1974 Recommended Dietary Allowances were the standard used to assess the diet quality of the household food supply. The RDA were designed to maintain good nutrition in essentially all healthy persons in the United States. Although a home food supply may meet the RDA for a nutrient, the diet of a member living in the home may not. This is because we do not know how the household food was divided among its members. However, if the household diet does not meet the RDA, some of the household members, if not all of them, have diets that do not meet the RDA. Failure to meet the RDA for one or more nutrients does not necessarily indicate either poor food practices or malnutrition.

Elderly households apparently had less difficulty in meeting the allowances for protein, iron, phosphorus, riboflavin, and ascorbic acid (met by 92 percent or more of the households) than for calcium and vitamin B_6 (met by less than 65 percent) (table 4) Food supplies of 73 percent of the households with at least one elderly member contained energy sufficient to meet the allowances.

Notable differences existed in the nutritive value of the food supplies used by the two groups of elderly households. The wider selection and greater use of foods by the households that met the seven RDA enabled them to do better nutritionally than the households that did not meet the seven RDA. The home food of the households meeting the seven RDA provided nutrients in amounts sufficient to enable 92 percent or more to attain the allowances for food energy, magnesium, phosphorus, and vitamin B_{12}, and for 80 percent to attain the RDA for

Table 4. *Households using food that met 1974 Recommended Dietary Allowances*[1]

Nutrient	All households	Households meeting 7 RDA	Households not meeting 7 RDA
		Percent	
Food energy	73	93	48
Protein	95	100	88
Calcium	64	100	19
Iron	92	100	82
Magnesium	71	93	44
Phosphorus	95	100	90
Vitamin A	83	100	62
Thiamin	86	100	68
Riboflavin	94	100	86
Vitamin B_6	57	80	28
Vitamin B_{12}	77	92	57
Ascorbic acid	93	100	85
All 7 nutrients[2]	56	100	0
All 11 nutients[3]	41	74	0

[1] Data from USDA Nationwide Food Consumption Survey 1977-78, Elderly supplemental sample, spring and summer, 1977.

[2] Protein, calcium, iron, vitamin A, thiamin, riboflavin, and ascorbic acid.

[3] Nutrients listed in footnote 2, plus magnesium, phosphorus, vitamin B_6, and vitamin B_{12}.

vitamin B_6. Households meeting the seven RDA had considerably more Calories and generally more nutrients (particularly calcium and vitamin A) per 1,000 Calories than the households that did not meet the RDA for these seven nutrients. Perhaps their use of larger quantities of such nutrient-packed foods as milk and milk products, vegetables, and fruits contributed to more nutrient-dense diets.

Households not meeting the seven RDA most frequently achieved the RDA for phosphorus, followed by protein, riboflavin, and ascorbic acid. Many of these households lacked recommended amounts of food energy and several nutrients. Generally, when food energy is in short supply, nutrients are also. The food supplies of 1 in 2 households failed to provide the RDA for food energy and magnesium, 3 in 4 were short of the RDA for vitamin B_6, and 4 in 5 were short in calcium. Two percent had food supplies short of the RDA for all seven of the selected nutrients. When levels of nutrients in household diets were compared with 80 percent of the RDA rather than 100 percent, about 1 in 4 of the households not meeting the seven RDA still failed to meet the lower standard for food energy and vitamin B_{12}, 3 in 10 were short in magnesium, and 1 in 2 were short in calcium and vitamin B_6. Thus, many did not attain 80 percent of the RDA for several nutrients.

Nutrient Returns per Dollar

The money value of home food usually affects nutrient returns per dollar. As a group, households with lower money values per person typically receive greater returns per dollar than do those with higher money values. Varying food prices, as well as food selection and consumption practices, also may influence the quantity of nutrients acquired from a dollar's worth of food.

The returns per dollar for several nutrients (table 5) were lower, however, among the households not meeting the seven RDA than among the households meeting the seven RDA despite the $8 less they spent per person for food. Returns may have been lower than expected because the amounts of

Table 5. *Nutrients per dollar's worth of home food* [1]

Nutrient	Households meeting 7 RDA	Households not meeting 7 RDA
	Amount of nutrients	
Food energy (Cal)	1,175	1,187
Protein (g)	41.2	42.6
Calcium (mg)	449	377
Iron (mg)	8.3	8.4
Magnesium (mg)	173	170
Phosphorus (mg)	730	704
Vitamin A (IU)	4,049	3,447
Thiamin (mg)	.77	.77
Riboflavin (mg)	1.06	1.01
Vitamin B_6 (mg)	.92	.91
Vitamin B_{12} (mcg)	2.56	2.38
Ascorbic acid (mg)	66	60

[1] Data from USDA Nationwide Food Consumption Survey 1977-78, Elderly supplemental sample, spring and summer 1977.

food used by these households were small. Evidently, the foods selected were not nutritious enough to offset the small quantities.

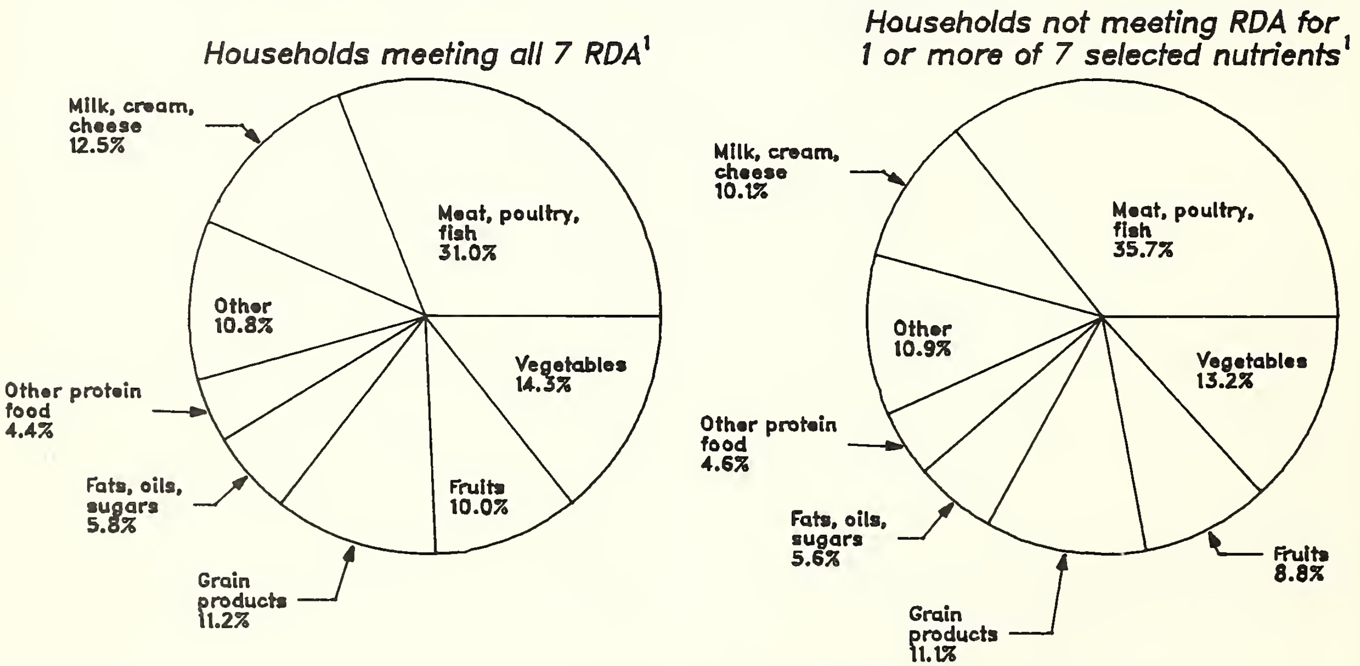
Notable differences in nutrient returns per dollar resulted for two nutrients--calcium and vitamin A. Households not meeting the seven RDA received 72 milligrams less calcium per dollar than did their counterparts, probably because they allotted $1.30 less per person for milk products (table 6) and used 5 pounds less (table 3). The households not meeting the seven RDA had 602 IU less vitamin A per dollar than did households that met the seven RDA, relating perhaps to their use of 7 pounds less vegetables and fruits per person in a week.

Although the dollar spent by both groups purchased similar returns of food energy, iron, magnesium, thiamin, and vitamin B_6, many households that did not meet the seven RDA failed to attain the allowances for these nutrients. This may be attributed to several factors including the small quantity of food used, the type of food selected, and the lower expenditure for food. If they had spent additional money in the same manner, it is likely that more households would have achieved the allowances for these nutrients. However, increased spending alone likely would not have alleviated the shortages of calcium and vitamin A.

Home Food Dollar

The food spending patterns of the two groups were dissimilar (see figure below). Allotments of the home food dollar to various food groups differed, as did also the actual amounts represented by the shares. Perhaps their different allocations for vegetables and fruits; milk and milk products; and meat, poultry, and fish partly were responsible for the disparity in the nutritive value of their diets. For example, the households that did not meet the seven RDA devoted 2 cents less per dollar to vegetables and fruits than did other households. This 2 cents per dollar represented $2.22 less in actual value and purchased 7 pounds less of fruits and vegetables per person per week. Many fruits and vegetables are known to be good sources of vitamin A and ascorbic

Share of Home Food Dollar in Households with Elderly Members



[1]Protein, calcium, iron, vitamin A, thiamin, riboflavin, and ascorbic acid.

Source: USDA NFCS 1977-78, Elderly Supplemental Sample, spring and summer 1977.

Table 6. *Money value of food at home per person*[1] *in a week*[2]

Food	All households	Households meeting 7 RDA	Households not meeting 7 RDA
Milk, cream, cheese	$1.96	$2.57	$1.27
Meat, poultry, fish	5.50	6.37	4.51
Beef	2.18	2.47	1.84
Bacon	.29	.33	.24
Other pork	.92	1.07	.75
Luncheon meat	.44	.54	.34
Poultry	.78	.88	.66
Fish	.60	.70	.50
Other protein foods	.75	.90	.58
Eggs	.35	.40	.29
Dry beans, peas, lentils	.09	.10	.07
Nuts, peanut butter	.13	.19	.07
Vegetables	2.35	2.94	1.67
Potatoes	.26	.31	.20
Dark green	.18	.24	.11
Deep yellow	.12	.16	.08
Tomatoes	.46	.58	.33
Fruits	1.62	2.06	1.11
Citrus	.44	.53	.34
Other ascorbic-acid-rich	.16	.20	.12
Grain products	1.88	2.30	1.40
Fats and oils	.54	.65	.40
Sugars and sweets	.85	1.03	.65
Sugar, syrup, jelly, candy	.42	.53	.30
Miscellaneous	1.40	1.72	1.04
Alcoholic beverages	.43	.58	.26

[1] 21 meals from household food supplies equivalent to 1 person. Average value per person is calculated using population ratio procedure.
[2] Data from USDA Nationwide Food Consumption Survey 1977-78, Elderly supplemental sample, spring and summer 1977.

acid--nutrients in shorter supply among these households. This group devoted a larger dollar share than did households meeting the seven RDA to meat, poultry, and fish (36 and 31 cents, respectively). Despite this, they actually spent $1.86 less and used 1-1/2 pounds less per person. The meat, poultry, and fish group often contributes much protein, iron, and B vitamins to the diet.

The smaller per dollar allotment made by the households not meeting the seven RDA (10 cents) than by the households that met the seven RDA (12.5 cents) for milk and milk products represented an actual difference of $1.30. Only one in five of the households that did not meet the seven RDA had food supplies that provided the RDA for calcium. Although milk is an excellent source of calcium, it may be regarded by some as difficult to digest, expensive to purchase, and a problem to store. Other foods that are important sources of calcium include green and leafy vegetables, dried beans, and grain products.

Your Home, Your Choice—A Workbook for Older People and Their Families

Your Home, Your Choice--A Workbook for Older People and Their Families was developed by the American Association of Retired Persons in cooperation with the Federal Trade Commission to help older people choose appropriate living arrangements as their requirements change. The workbook is designed to encourage people to plan for and make informed decisions about altered circumstances and future housing needs. Topics covered include support services and home adaptations that can make it possible to remain at home; alternatives to living alone; and supportive housing such as nursing homes, board and care homes, congregate housing, and continuing care retirement communities. Each chapter concludes with a list of questions to ask before making a decision. An informative resource section lists private and public agencies and organizations that assist the elderly and suggests additional references on housing alternatives. The 32-page booklet is available free from the Consumer Information Center, Pueblo, CO 81009 (303-948-3334).

Macroeconomic-Demographic Model

Population aging will be a significant factor in the future evolution of our economy, affecting productivity, consumption, savings, and investment as well as the income level of the elderly population. A long-term Macroeconomic-Demographic Model of the U.S. economy was developed for the National Institute on Aging (NIA) for use in assessing how the changing age structure of the population and its economic consequences will affect retirement income.

The NIA Macroeconomic-Demographic Model combines a population model with a macroeconomic growth model and a disaggregated labor market model, which together comprise the core modeling system. The Population Model uses a large amount of demographic information to project the working-age and retired populations to the year 2055, given specified fertility rates, mortality rates, and immigration levels. The Macroeconomic Growth Model and the Labor Market Model work together to project levels of economic activity and labor market outcomes for 22 sex-age groups. The information provided by the core modeling system is applied to the simulation of three pension system models (Social Security, private pension, and public employee pension) and two income transfer models (Supplemental Security Income and Medicare).

The Macroeconomic-Demographic Model enables researchers and policymakers to examine a wide range of income security issues within a single model. The model is a useful tool in long-term projections and analyses and in highlighting problems in meeting public and private commitments to the elderly. The Macroeconomic-Demographic Model currently is being used in analyses for the Federal Government.

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1984, The National Institute on Aging Macroeconomic-Demographic Model, NIH Publication No. 83-2492.

Poverty Status of Persons and Families in 1983[1]

The poverty rate for 1983 did not differ significantly from that of 1982.[2] In 1983, 15.2 percent of the population (35.3 million people) were living in poverty compared with 15.0 percent (34.4 million people) in 1982. The stability of poverty rates over the 1982-83 period is also evident in the experiences of most major subgroups of the population (see table on p. 21).

About 7.6 million families were living in poverty in 1983, not significantly different from the 1982 level. The number of poor unrelated individuals, however, rose significantly from 6.5 million to 6.8 million. The

[1] For information on measuring poverty, see "Measuring Poverty," Family Economics Review 1984(2):9-13, by Daniel H. Weinberg.

[2] Ninety-five-percent confidence level used throughout except where otherwise noted.

Persons, families, and unrelated individuals below the poverty level in 1983[1]

Characteristic	Below poverty level (numbers in thousands)	Poverty rate	
		1983	Difference from 1982 (percentage points)
All persons	35,266	15.2	0.2
White	23,974	12.1	0.1
Black	9,885	35.7	0.1
Spanish origin[2]	4,249	28.4	-1.5
Under 15 years	11,801	23.0	0.4
15 to 24 years	6,944	17.6	* 1.1
25 to 44 years	8,379	11.9	0.1
45 to 54 years	2,023	9.1	-0.3
55 to 59 years	1,173	10.4	0.5
60 to 64 years	1,234	11.5	0.2
65 years and over	3,711	14.1	-0.5
Related children under 18 years	13,668	22.1	0.4
In families	13,326	21.7	0.4
In unrelated subfamilies	342	61.2	0.9
In metropolitan areas	21,750	13.8	0.1
In central cities	12,872	19.8	-0.1
Outside central cities	8,878	9.6	0.3
Outside metropolitan areas	13,516	18.3	0.5
Northeast	6,561	13.4	0.4
Midwest[3]	8,536	14.6	* 1.3
South	13,484	17.2	* -0.9
West	6,684	14.7	0.6
All families	7,641	12.3	0.1
Married-couple families	3,820	7.6	([4])
Male householder, no wife present	264	13.0	-1.4
Female householder, no husband present	3,557	36.0	-0.3
All unrelated individuals	6,832	23.4	0.3
Male	2,619	19.9	* 1.1
Female	4,213	26.2	-0.4

[1] Data are from the Income Supplement of the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey of March 1984.
[2] Persons of Spanish origin may be of any race.
[3] Formerly the North Central Region.
[4] No change.

* Significant at the 95-percent confidence level.

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1985, Characteristics of the population below the poverty level, 1983, Current Population Reports, Consumer Income, Series P-60, No. 147.

increase resulted from a significant rise in the number of poor unrelated males.

The poverty threshold for a family of four rose from $9,862 in 1982 to $10,178 in 1983. Poverty thresholds rise each year by the same percentage as the annual average Consumer Price Index. The 1983 "poverty gap"--the amount of money income needed to raise a poor family above the poverty line--was $4,020 for poor families, not significantly different, in real terms, from 1982. The poverty gap for unrelated individuals was $2,230, an increase of $50 in real terms from the previous year (significant at the 90-percent confidence level).

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1985, Characteristics of the population below the poverty level: 1983, Current Population Reports, Consumer Income, Series P-60, No. 147.

Costs and Benefits of the Electronic Fund Transfer Act[1]

Most consumers now have a checking, saving, or money market deposit account that has at least one electronic fund transfer (EFT) feature.[2] Consumer rights and protections in the operation of EFT systems were established by the Electronic Fund Transfer Act, which became law in November 1978.

The Federal Reserve Board has responsibility for writing regulations to implement the EFT Act and for administering and enforcing the act for State member banks. Under Regulation E (Electronic Fund Transfers) financial institutions must comply with a number of specific disclosure and documentation requirements and other consumer safeguards, such as error resolution procedures and liability limits for losses from unauthorized transfers. These rules have costs as well as benefits associated with them. The Board is required by law to analyze the costs and benefits of the EFT Act to consumers and other users of EFT systems and to report annually to the Congress. As part of these efforts, the Board conducted a survey of financial institutions in 1981-82 to determine the costs of complying with Regulation E. Sixty-seven institutions, representing a wide range of sizes, types, and geographic locations, voluntarily responded to the survey questionnaire. The incremental compliance cost to the financial institution of an EFT transaction, including startup as well as ongoing costs, ranged from $0.10 to $0.33 through the first year of compliance. Although the cost of compliance may appear to be high relative to the cost of an EFT transaction, EFT transactions, nonetheless, have a cost advantage over check-based transactions. In the long run, EFT transactions can be made at little incremental cost. Consequently, as EFT systems mature and are more heavily utilized, the average compliance cost per transaction is expected to decrease.

Other data indicate that although consumers are not widely aware of protections afforded by the EFT Act, EFT systems are, nonetheless, working well. The Board's Consumer Complaint Control System received only 75 complaints regarding EFT in 1982, measured against 3 billion transactions yearly at ATM's (automatic teller machines) alone. Also, a 1983 survey of consumers (see footnote 2) found that while 6 percent of respondents who had an account with an EFT feature alleged an error attributable to that feature, 75 percent of those complained to the institution, with nearly all (95 percent) satisfied with the resolution of the matter.

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[1] For information on electronic fund transfer systems, see "EFTS--Electronic Funds Transfer Systems," Family Economics Review, winter 1980, by Cynthia L. Jennings, pp. 9-13; and Electronic Funds Transfer," Family Economic Review 1984, No. 1, p. 6.

[2] In an April 1983 telephone survey conducted for the Federal Reserve Board by the University of Michigan Survey Research Center, 61 percent of responding households and 69 percent of those with a checking, saving, or money market deposit account, reported having an EFT feature.

Source: Schroeder, Frederick J., 1985, Compliance Costs and Consumer Benefits of the Electronic Fund Transfer Act: Recent Survey Evidence, Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, Staff Studies No. 143.

Regional Research Report — Innovative Housing

Solar, earth-sheltered, manufactured, and multifamily housing are receiving increased attention as both the purchase and energy costs of conventional housing increase. Regional Project S-141, "Housing for Low- and Moderate-Income Families," investigated public acceptability of and institutional effects on these innovative housing forms. Personal interviews completed with 1,804 southern households revealed that many families would consider living in solar retrofit (65 percent), passive solar (54 percent), active solar (50 percent),

earth-sheltered (32 percent), multifamily (27 percent), and manufactured (21 percent) housing. Respondents who were younger, who had higher incomes, and who had higher educational levels were more likely to consider living in the solar and earth-sheltered housing forms, whereas the converse was true about respondents interested in the multifamily and manufactured housing forms. Questionnaires completed by county and municipal officials representing 1,371 southern jurisdictions indicated that climate, population, and government support and/or intervention also influenced acceptability of innovative housing. Results of Project S-141 are summarized in the Southern Cooperative Series Bulletins 298 and 305.[1] Further exploration of innovative housing currently is underway through the recently approved Regional Project S-194, "Barriers and Incentives to Affordable Housing."

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[1] Perceptions of Alternative Housing: A Data Book, Southern Cooperative Series Bulletin 298, 1983, is available (supply limited) for $4 from the University of Georgia, Agricultural Experiment Station, 125 Barrow Hall, Athens, GA, 30602; The Impact of Codes and Regulatory Practices on the Presence of Energy-Efficient Alternative Housing, Southern Cooperative Series Bulletin 305, 1984, is available free from the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Virginia Agricultural Experiment Station, Blacksburg, VA, 24061.

Source: Report submitted by Kenneth R. Tremblay, Jr., University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. Additional information about Regional Projects S-141 and S-194 and a complete list of publications and manuscripts may be obtained from Margaret Weber, Chair of Regional Committee S-194, Department of Housing, Design, and Consumer Studies, Room 438 H.E.W., Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078.

BLS Consumer Expenditure Interview Survey Data Available

Microdata tapes containing information on consumer expenditures, income, and characteristics collected in 1980-81 from the Interview component of the ongoing Consumer Expenditure Survey are available from the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). The data, collected from samples of approximately 5,000 households each year, include monthly expenditures for housing, apparel and services, transportation, health care, entertainment, personal care, reading, education, food, alcoholic beverages, tobacco, cash contributions, and personal insurance and pensions; and socioeconomic characteristics of each household. For further information about the tapes, contact the Division of Consumer Expenditure Surveys, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Room 4216, 600 E Street, NW., Washington, DC 20212 (phone: 202-272-5060). To purchase the tapes, send a check (payable to Bureau of Labor Statistics) to Division of Planning and Financial Management, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Room 2127, 441 G Street NW., Washington, DC 20212. Cost of the tapes is $230 for 1600 BPI (eight tapes) and $130 for 6250 BPI (two tapes). Specify whether you want labeled or unlabeled tapes.

A new publication from BLS presents selected results from the Survey. Thirty tables show expenditures and income for American consumers grouped by characteristics such as family income, family size, age of householder, and region of residence. Other information in the bulletin includes comparisons of the 1980-81 data with other data (including the 1972-73 Consumer Expenditure Survey), description of methodology, and some analysis of the data. Consumer Expenditure Survey: Interview Survey, 1980-81, Bulletin 2225 (Stock No. 029-001-02841-5) may be ordered for $6 from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402, or the Chicago Regional Office of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 9th floor, Federal Office Building, 230 South Dearborn Street, Chicago, IL 60604.

Child Support and Alimony

Concern over the economic condition of women and children involved in divorce and separation has grown due to the high divorce rate and increases in the number of families headed by women with no husbands present. The Bureau of the Census conducted a survey in 1979 and again in 1982 to obtain data on child support and alimony. The resulting report presents information on payments made to mothers for the support of their children by absent fathers, and information on alimony payments and property settlement awards for women involved in marital dissolution.

As of spring 1982, 8.4 million mothers were living with a child under age 21 whose father was not living with them. Of these women, 59 percent were awarded or had an agreement to receive child support payments for their children. However, only 47 percent of those due payment received the full amount due. For women receiving payments irregularly or not at all, the main reason reported was refusal of the father to pay.

The mean amount of child support for women who received payments in 1981 was $2,110. After adjusting for inflation over the period from 1978, the average child support payment showed a 16-percent decrease from the 1978 figure. This decrease is not surprising since support payments rarely have escalator clauses that adjust for increases in consumer prices. The women most likely to be awarded and to receive child support payments were white women, women who had attended college, women in white-collar occupations, women living outside of central cities within metropolitan areas, and those with unearned income other than government transfer payments.

Of the 8.4 million mothers of children with an absent father, 31 percent had incomes below the poverty level in 1981. Only 31 percent of these women had agreements and were due to receive child support in 1981. Of those due to receive child support, only 60 percent received payments, with a mean payment of $1,440. The characteristics of poor women who were most likely to receive child support payments paralleled the characteristics for all women.

As of spring 1982, only about 15 percent of the 17 million ever-divorced or currently separated women were awarded or had an agreement to receive alimony or maintenance payments. Women most likely to have an award were women over age 40 who were divorced or separated prior to 1970 and not working at the time of the divorce or separation. Black women and women under age 30 were least likely to receive an award. The mean amount of alimony received in 1981 was $3,000. This payment represents a 25-percent decrease from the average level of 1978 after adjusting for inflation. Of the 3.5 million ever-divorced or currently separated women below the poverty level, about 11 percent were awarded or had an agreement to receive alimony or maintenance payments, with an average payment of $1,250 in 1981.

About 42 percent of the 14.2 million women who had ever been divorced received some form of property settlement as of spring 1982. Women most likely to have a property settlement were those between the ages of 30 and 39 and those with 4 or more years of college.

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1985, Child support and alimony: 1981, Current Population Reports, Special Studies, Series P-23, No. 140.

Cost of Food at Home

Cost of food at home estimated for food plans at 4 cost levels, June 1985, U.S. average[1]

Sex-age group	Cost for 1 week				Cost for 1 month			
	Thrifty plan	Low-cost plan	Moderate-cost plan	Liberal plan	Thrifty plan	Low-cost plan	Moderate-cost plan	Liberal plan
FAMILIES								
Family of 2:[2]								
20-50 years	$37.00	$46.40	$57.10	$70.40	$160.20	$201.10	$247.60	$305.20
51 years and over	35.00	44.30	54.40	65.10	151.40	192.20	236.30	282.00
Family of 4:								
Couple, 20-50 years and children--								
1-2 and 3-5 years	53.80	67.00	81.50	99.50	233.40	289.90	353.30	431.70
6-8 and 9-11 years	62.00	78.80	98.20	117.80	268.50	341.40	425.80	510.80
INDIVIDUALS[3]								
Child:								
1-2 years	9.70	11.80	13.70	16.40	42.10	51.00	59.20	71.30
3-5 years	10.50	13.00	15.90	19.10	45.70	56.10	69.00	82.90
6-8 years	13.00	17.10	21.40	24.90	56.20	74.20	92.70	108.10
9-11 years	15.40	19.50	24.90	28.90	66.70	84.40	108.00	125.20
Male:								
12-14 years	16.10	22.10	27.40	32.20	69.60	95.60	118.90	139.50
15-19 years	16.70	22.90	28.30	32.80	72.60	99.10	122.40	142.00
20-50 years	17.70	22.50	28.10	33.80	76.80	97.50	121.90	146.50
51 years and over	16.10	21.30	26.10	31.30	69.70	92.30	113.30	135.40
Female:								
12-19 years	16.00	19.00	23.00	27.70	69.10	82.50	99.70	120.10
20-50 years	15.90	19.70	23.80	30.20	68.80	85.30	103.20	131.00
51 years and over	15.70	19.00	23.40	27.90	67.90	82.40	101.50	121.00

[1] Assumes that food for all meals and snacks is purchased at the store and prepared at home. Estimates for the thrifty food plan were computed from quantities of foods published in Family Economics Review, 1984 No. 1. Estimates for the other plans were computed from quantities of foods published in Family Economics Review, 1983 No. 2. The costs of the food plans are estimated by updating prices paid by households surveyed in 1977-78 in USDA's Nationwide Food Consumption Survey. USDA updates these survey prices using information from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (CPI Detailed Report, table 3) to estimate the costs for the food plans.

[2] 10 percent added for family size adjustment. See footnote 3.

[3] The costs given are for individuals in 4-person families. For individuals in other size families, the following adjustments are suggested: 1-person--add 20 percent; 2-person--add 10 percent; 3-person--add 5 percent; 5- or 6-person--subtract 5 percent; 7- or more-person--subtract 10 percent.

Updated Estimates of the Cost of Raising a Child

The cost of raising urban children: June 1985; moderate-cost level [1]

Region and age of child (years)	Total	Food at home [2]	Food away from home	Clothing	Housing [3]	Medical care	Education	Transportation	All other [4]
MIDWEST: [5]									
Under 1	$4,429	$570	$0	$140	$1,909	$298	$0	$890	$622
1	4,558	699	0	140	1,909	298	0	890	622
2-3	4,240	699	0	228	1,678	298	0	775	562
4-5	4,490	803	146	228	1,678	298	0	775	562
6	4,692	777	146	316	1,591	298	138	775	651
7-9	4,873	958	146	316	1,591	298	138	775	651
10-11	5,055	1,140	146	316	1,591	298	138	775	651
12	5,396	1,166	175	456	1,649	298	138	833	681
13-15	5,525	1,295	175	456	1,649	298	138	833	681
16-17	6,059	1,450	175	632	1,707	298	138	919	740
Total	89,957	18,155	2,218	6,176	30,086	5,364	1,656	14,700	11,602
NORTHEAST:									
Under 1	4,386	673	0	140	1,938	298	0	775	562
1	4,542	829	0	140	1,938	298	0	775	562
2-3	4,422	803	0	246	1,765	298	0	718	592
4-5	4,672	907	146	246	1,765	298	0	718	592
6	5,021	907	175	333	1,736	298	173	718	681
7-9	5,202	1,088	175	333	1,736	298	173	718	681
10-11	5,435	1,321	175	333	1,736	298	173	718	681
12	5,766	1,321	175	491	1,794	298	173	804	710
13-15	5,921	1,476	175	491	1,794	298	173	804	710
16-17	6,345	1,632	204	614	1,823	298	173	861	740
Total	94,832	20,748	2,450	6,454	32,174	5,364	2,076	13,668	11,898
SOUTH:									
Under 1	4,823	622	0	158	2,054	332	0	947	710
1	4,952	751	0	158	2,054	332	0	947	710
2-3	4,640	725	0	246	1,823	332	0	833	681
4-5	4,864	803	146	246	1,823	332	0	833	681
6	5,159	803	175	333	1,736	332	207	833	740
7-9	5,314	958	175	333	1,736	332	207	833	740
10-11	5,522	1,166	175	333	1,736	332	207	833	740
12	5,883	1,166	204	491	1,794	332	207	890	799
13-15	6,038	1,321	204	491	1,794	332	207	890	799
16-17	6,482	1,450	204	632	1,852	332	207	976	829
Total	97,889	18,467	2,566	6,526	32,696	5,976	2,484	15,736	13,438
WEST:									
Under 1	4,751	622	0	140	1,996	365	0	947	681
1	4,906	777	0	140	1,996	365	0	947	681
2-3	4,652	751	0	228	1,794	365	0	833	681
4-5	4,931	855	175	228	1,794	365	0	833	681
6	5,300	829	204	333	1,765	365	173	861	770
7-9	5,481	1,010	204	333	1,765	365	173	861	770
10-11	5,714	1,243	204	333	1,765	365	173	861	770
12	6,028	1,243	204	474	1,823	365	173	947	799
13-15	6,158	1,373	204	474	1,823	365	173	947	799
16-17	6,754	1,554	234	597	1,909	365	173	1,034	888
Total	100,004	19,426	2,858	6,280	32,868	6,570	2,076	16,248	13,678

[1] Annual cost of raising a child from birth to age 18, by age, in a husband-wife family with no more than 5 children. For more information on these and additional child cost estimates, see USDA Miscellaneous Publication No. 1411, "USDA Estimates of the Cost of Raising a Child: A Guide to Their Use and Interpretation," by Carolyn S. Edwards, Family Economics Research Group, Agricultural Research Service, USDA.

[2] Includes home-produced food and school lunches.

[3] Includes shelter, fuel, utilities, household operations, furnishings, and equipment.

[4] Includes personal care, recreation, reading, and other miscellaneous expenditures.

[5] Formerly the North Central Region.

The cost of raising rural nonfarm children: June 1985; moderate-cost level [1]

Region and age of child (years)	Total	Food at home [2]	Food away from home	Clothing	Housing [3]	Medical care	Education	Transportation	All other [4]
MIDWEST: [5]									
Under 1	$4,185	$518	$0	$123	$1,823	$298	$0	$861	$562
1	4,315	648	0	123	1,823	298	0	861	562
2-3	3,834	622	0	193	1,533	265	0	718	503
4-5	4,054	725	117	193	1,533	265	0	718	503
6	4,384	725	146	298	1,504	265	138	746	562
7-9	4,540	881	146	298	1,504	265	138	746	562
10-11	4,747	1,088	146	298	1,504	265	138	746	562
12	5,110	1,088	146	456	1,562	265	138	833	622
13-15	5,239	1,217	146	456	1,562	265	138	833	622
16-17	5,623	1,347	175	562	1,591	298	138	861	651
Total	83,847	16,837	2,044	5,754	28,232	4,902	1,656	14,124	10,298
NORTHEAST:									
Under 1	4,859	622	0	140	2,054	298	0	1,005	740
1	4,988	751	0	140	2,054	298	0	1,005	740
2-3	4,760	725	0	228	1,880	298	0	919	710
4-5	5,039	829	175	228	1,880	298	0	919	710
6	5,412	829	204	333	1,852	298	207	919	770
7-9	5,567	984	204	333	1,852	298	207	919	770
10-11	5,800	1,217	204	333	1,852	298	207	919	770
12	6,149	1,217	204	509	1,909	298	207	976	829
13-15	6,305	1,373	204	509	1,909	298	207	976	829
16-17	6,851	1,528	234	667	1,967	298	207	1,062	888
Total	101,924	19,088	2,858	6,560	34,310	5,364	2,484	17,228	14,032
SOUTH:									
Under 1	5,024	622	0	158	2,054	332	0	1,148	710
1	5,127	725	0	158	2,054	332	0	1,148	710
2-3	4,640	699	0	246	1,765	332	0	947	651
4-5	4,919	803	175	246	1,765	332	0	947	651
6	5,126	777	175	333	1,707	332	173	919	710
7-9	5,281	932	175	333	1,707	332	173	919	710
10-11	5,489	1,140	175	333	1,707	332	173	919	710
12	5,898	1,140	204	509	1,765	332	173	1,005	770
13-15	6,027	1,269	204	509	1,765	332	173	1,005	770
16-17	6,539	1,425	234	720	1,794	332	173	1,062	799
Total	98,273	18,001	2,684	6,774	32,058	5,976	2,076	17,742	12,962
WEST:									
Under 1	5,216	622	0	140	2,083	365	0	1,148	858
1	5,345	751	0	140	2,083	365	0	1,148	858
2-3	4,825	725	0	228	1,794	332	0	976	770
4-5	5,104	829	175	228	1,794	332	0	976	770
6	5,500	803	175	351	1,765	365	207	976	858
7-9	5,681	984	175	351	1,765	365	207	976	858
10-11	5,888	1,191	175	351	1,765	365	207	976	858
12	6,297	1,191	204	527	1,823	365	207	1,062	918
13-15	6,453	1,347	204	527	1,823	365	207	1,062	918
16-17	7,069	1,528	234	614	1,938	365	207	1,206	977
Total	104,532	18,906	2,684	6,634	33,100	6,438	2,484	18,716	15,570

[1] Annual cost of raising a child from birth to age 18, by age, in a husband-wife family with no more than 5 children. For more information on these and additional child cost estimates, see USDA Miscellaneous Publication No. 1411, "USDA Estimates of the Cost of Raising a Child: A Guide to Their Use and Interpretation," by Carolyn S. Edwards, Family Economics Research Group, Agricultural Research Service, USDA.

[2] Includes home-produced food and school lunches.

[3] Includes shelter, fuel, utilities, household operations, furnishings, and equipment.

[4] Includes personal care, recreation, reading, and other miscellaneous expenditures.

[5] Formerly the North Central Region.

Consumer Prices

Consumer Price Index for all urban consumers [1967 = 100]

Group	July 1985	June 1985	May 1985	July 1984
All items	322.8	322.3	321.3	311.7
Food	309.5	309.3	308.9	303.2
Food at home	296.2	296.0	296.2	292.5
Food away from home	347.3	346.9	345.1	334.4
Housing	351.6	350.4	348.5	338.1
Shelter	383.2	381.0	379.5	362.7
Rent, residential	265.0	263.6	262.6	249.7
Fuel and other utilities	399.9	399.4	393.0	393.9
Fuel oil, coal, and bottled gas	601.9	612.0	620.8	637.4
Gas (piped) and electricity	467.1	465.6	454.7	459.1
Household furnishings and operation	246.5	247.1	247.6	241.9
Apparel and upkeep	202.8	204.6	205.3	196.6
Men's and boys'	194.5	196.4	197.8	189.8
Women's and girls'	163.4	166.5	168.0	156.2
Footwear	211.4	213.9	213.2	208.0
Transportation	321.8	321.8	321.4	312.9
Private	316.1	316.3	316.0	307.5
Public	402.4	399.3	398.4	389.3
Medical care	404.0	401.7	399.5	380.3
Entertainment	265.7	264.8	263.6	255.3
Other goods and services	325.0	323.0	322.3	306.5
Personal care	282.3	281.7	280.9	271.8

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

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Agricultural Outlook '86 Program — Outlook for Families

The Agricultural Outlook Conference will be held from December 3 to 5, 1985, in Washington, DC. To obtain additional information about the Conference or to register in advance, write: Outlook '86, Room 5143, South Building, Washington, DC 20250, or call 202-447-3050. To obtain Conference materials and a building pass to this free Conference, participants are asked to go to the Patio in USDA's Administration Building at 12th Street and Independence Avenue.

Home Economics: Outlook for Families will convene on the morning of December 4, in room 107-A of USDA's Administration Building. The first session will examine how economic trends and conditions will affect families and, in particular, what economic issues are influencing farm family living. This year's human nutrition program, "Dietary Guidelines--Spreading the Word," will focus on plans to help consumers use the USDA/HHS Dietary Guidelines for Americans (Second edition) in their everyday lives. Plans developed by the Federal Government, the Cooperative Extension Service, and supermarkets will be featured.

A live access telephone line service will not be available for the sessions listed below.

Wednesday, December 4

8:00-8:30	Coffee and conversation outside Room 107-A
8:30-10:30	**FAMILY ECONOMICS**
	Moderator - (to be announced)
	Economic Outlook for Families - Colien Hefferan, ARS-USDA Discussants - Josephine Turner, ES-USDA Harold D. Guither, University of Illinois
	Economic Outlook for Farm Families - Kathleen K. Scholl, ARS-USDA Discussants - Ronald T. Daly, ES-USDA Karen P. Goebel, University of Wisconsin
10:45-12:15	**DIETARY GUIDELINES--SPREADING THE WORD**
	Moderator - Suzanne S. Harris, HNIS-USDA
	Federal Government's Role - Susan O. Welsh, HNIS-USDA
	Cooperative Extension Service's Role - Jean M. Howe, ES-USDA
	Food Marketing Strategies - Susan N. Borra, Food Marketing Institute.

Highlights

Employed Women's Sewing Time

Adjustable Rate Mortgages

Food Used by Elderly Households